CHILDSPRAY THEATRE PRESENTS

Selena Maria sings

Book and Lyrics by Miriam Gonzales
Directed by Melissa Crespo
Composer Daniel French

Dramaturg: Jenny Millinger
Music Director: Michelle Chin
Costume Design: Addy Diaz
Lighting Design: Daniel Davisson
Projection Design: Dallas Nichols

OCTOBER 3–31, 2021
Herberger Theater Center–Stage West

Storybook Preview Sponsor

THE STEELE FOUNDATION

Season Sponsor
Billie Jo & Judd HERBERGER

Running Time: 70 MINUTES

Selena Maria Sings is produced in partnership with The Magik Theatre, Anthony Runfola, Artistic Director, San Antonio, TX.
Dear Friends,

It is so wonderful to see you! When the world came to a stop in March 2020, most of us thought we would be back to “normal” in a matter of weeks, or at most a few months. Little did we know what the pandemic and world events had in store. There has been so much suffering and loss, including within our own families. To those who have experienced loss, we offer our deepest sympathies.

Theatre is by its definition a communal and collaborative art form. It pained us not to be able to gather in one place with you to celebrate imagination and wonder, as we have done since 1977. But, the thoughtful and creative people at Childsplay didn’t let a global pandemic stop us from pursuing our mission.

When theaters closed, we explored different ways to share stories with you. We created digital content for families and schools, our Academy and residency programs went virtual, and we learned how to teach drama classes over Zoom. We also developed ways to engage families with YouTube videos featuring stories, games, and activities.

45,000 students enjoyed our virtual field trips over the 20/21 school year. We created and filmed four one-person plays, which we offered online to schools at no cost. In partnership with the Maricopa County Library District, we also offered these plays as a series of live drive-in performances at their library parking lots, where families could watch from the safety of their automobiles. Finally, with strict safety protocols and a dose of creativity, we produced A Christmas Carol at the Herberger Theater Center’s temporary outdoor stage.

Now we are back inside the theater, and you are here with us. We don’t take either of those two facts lightly. Thank you for trusting us to provide strikingly original theatre for your family in an environment that is safe for all involved. Together we will get the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, and move onto a brave new future.

Speaking of the future, Childsplay is thrilled to open the season with the world premiere of Selena Maria Sings by Miriam Gonzales. We believe that this play about overcoming adversity and celebrating what makes you you, is the perfect play to bring us back to the theater. This production, along with many others you will see in the coming years, are all part of our commitment to children—to their stories, their lives, their concerns, and their dreams.

Thanks to your support, Childsplay will be here, nurturing and preserving imagination and wonder when this global pandemic is a distant memory.

With gratitude,

Dwayne Hartford, Artistic Director
Steve Martin, Managing Director
Matthew Benjamin, President, Board of Trustees
**THE CAST**

Felly/Mrs. Coleman ................................................................. Andrea Morales
Vicky/Olga/Moon Goddess .................................................. Celena Vera Morgan
Selena .................................................................................... Kariana Sanchez
Rudy/Herman/Minion .......................................................... Michael Salinas
Cissy ........................................................................................ Sedona Valdez

**Andrea Morales (Felly/Mrs. Coleman)** is delighted to return to Childsplay, her home theatre and family. She is an actor, voiceover artist, and educator who enjoys working nationally. Favorite Childsplay shows include *Eric and Elliot*, *The Sun Serpent*, *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse*, *Salt and Pepper*, *The Imaginators*, and *Charlotte’s Web*. She had the privilege of touring *Tomás and the Library Lady* nationally, performing at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles and the Sin Fronteras Festival in Austin. Recent regional credits include *Gloria–A Life* (Human Race Theatre Company), *Native Gardens* (Southern Rep Theatre), *Always, Patsy Cline* (Swine Palace Theatre) and *It’s a Wonderful Life–The Radio Play* (American Theatre Company). She is an Artistic Associate of Magnolia Theatre Company and works for Advance Gender Equity in the Arts (AGE). Andréa is a proud member of the Screen Actors Guild.

**Celena Vera Morgan (Vicky/Olga/Moon Goddess)** is over the moon to be making her Childsplay Arizona debut! Celena Vera is a New York City based actor with the best roommate anyone could ever ask for, Truly Scrumptious (dog). Off Broadway: Little Red (Into the Woods) Regional: *Sister Mary Robert* (Sister Act), *Columbia* (The Rocky Horror Show), *Amy* (Company). FireStarter Entertainment. BFA Ithaca College. Instagram: @celenavmorgan. Website: celenaveramorgan.com

(Continued)
THE CAST (Continued)

Kariana Sanchez (Selena Maria) is thrilled to be working with Childsplay for the first time. Other credits include Vanessa in In the Heights, Serena in Legally Blonde the Musical (Lees-McRae Summer Theatre), Diana in All’s Well that Ends Well (Hedgepig Ensemble Theatre), and Ensemble in Sueños: Our American Musical (New York Theatre Barn). Kariana is also the co-host of a Latine society/culture podcast called The Bandwagon Effect on Spotify and Apple Podcasts. Kariana holds her BFA in Acting from Florida State University.

Michael Salinas (Rudy/Herman/Minion) Michael Salinas is proud to make his Childsplay debut in Selena Maria Sings! His credits include Charlotte’s Web at The Magik Theatre (Uncle Homer), The Office: A Murder Mystery Parody (Jim Halpert), Señora Tortuga (Pedro), and Next to Normal (Henry).

Sedona Valdez (Cissy) Sedona is thrilled to be back with the amazing team at Childsplay for a show she holds so close to her heart! Other Childsplay credits include Elephant and Piggie’s “We Are In a Play!” (Squirelle), the national tour of Maddi’s Fridge (Sofia), and Charlotte’s Web (Fern). Other favorite shows include Bye Bye Birdie (Rose Alvarez) with Desert Foothills Theatre and The Last Five Years (Cathy) with United Colours of Arizona Theatre. Sedona has a Bachelor’s degree in Musical Theatre Performance from Arizona State University.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Melissa Crespo (Director) Melissa Crespo is a director of new plays, musicals and opera. Favorite past credits include: world premiere of Charly Evon Simpson’s Form of a Girl Unknown (Salt Lake Acting Company), Promenade by María Irene Fornés and Al Carmines (Artist-in-Residence at NYU Tisch), and her production of Karen Zacarias’ Native Gardens co-produced by Syracuse Stage, Geva Theatre Center and Portland Center Stage. Her play Egress, co-written with Sarah Saltwick, will receive a NNPN Rolling World Premiere at Amphibian Stage and Salt Lake Acting Company starting this Fall. Melissa has served as a Time Warner Fellow at WP Theater, Allen Lee Hughes Directing Fellow at Arena Stage, Van Lier Directing Fellow at Second Stage Theatre and is an alum of the Drama League Director’s Project. She is a Usual Suspect at New York Theatre.
THE CREATIVE TEAM (Continued)

Workshop and received her MFA in Directing from The New School for Drama where she is now a faculty member. She is a current member of the Stonehenge NYC Still Standing Residency and was recently named Associate Artistic Director of Syracuse Stage. (melissacrespo.com)

Miriam Gonzales (Playwright) works include: The Smartest Girl in the World; Sunny and Licorice; Óyeme, the beautiful; Ten Seconds; Selena Maria Sings; Oh Mighty Mollie; The South Overlook Oaks (adaptation); Bertie, Maggie and the Magic Zero; and Girl Power! Her plays have been produced at Childsplay Theater (Tempe, AZ), Imagination Stage (Bethesda, MD), Arts on the Horizon (Alexandria, VA), Atlas Theater (Washington, DC), Columbus Children’s Theater (Columbus, OH), Austin Playhouse (Austin, TX), Storybook Theater (Calgary, Alberta), The Kennedy Center (NSO), and Dallas Children’s Theater and San Antonio’s Magik Theatre (both scheduled for 2022). Her work has toured extensively into schools and communities throughout the DC area and Arizona. Play development and professional readings include: Write Now (Childsplay Theater), La Jolla Playhouse’s DNA New Works Series, Magik Theatre, Northwestern University’s PLAYground New Play Festival, Imagination Stage, Latinx TYA Theater Commons, Georgetown University’s International Cross-currents Festival, and TCG and AATE conferences. Miriam is a former teaching artist with Young Playwrights’ Theater (YPT) in Washington, D.C., and served as YPT’s Board Chair. She currently serves on the Board of the Children’s Theatre Foundation of America and on the Advisory Council of ReImagine (New plays for TYA). Miriam is the co-developer and former lead teaching artist of Imagination Stage’s Óyeme Theater Arts Program for Central American refugee youth. Awards: Write Now/Bonderman Award, Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award, AATE Distinguished Play Awards, and the Imagination Award from Imagination Stage Theater. Miriam is a graduate of Brown University and received her Ph.D. in Education and M.A. in Sociology from Stanford University.

Daniel French (Mohawk/Raramuri) (Composer) Born and raised in L.A.’s diverse San Gabriel Valley, Daniel grew up with musical influences from around the world. His first gig in music came when he got caught playing a pair of unattended bongo drums at church at age 10. Daniel started in the youth group band and now works as a musician and composer based in Los Angeles. Pre-COVID, he toured the world six months per year with his band Las Cafeteras, gracing stages from WOMAD to Montreal Jazz, Bonnaroo to the Hollywood Bowl and beyond. Bridging purpose with party, Las Cafeteras’ music continues to reach ears worldwide. You can hear Daniel’s music featured in award-winning shows like Kamau Bell’s United Shades of America, Party of Five, telenovela Bajo El Mismo Cielo, and even at Bernie Sanders rallies. Follow his latest work on Instagram at @frenchismexican and his band at lascafeteras.com

(Continued)
Jenny Millinger (Dramaturg/Associate Artistic Director) is in her 19th season with Childsplay, where she is the Associate Artistic Director. Millinger has been honored to serve as a dramaturge for the world premiere productions of The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, The Sun Serpent, Rock the Presidents, Pete or The Return of Peter Pan, The Color of Stars, Recipe for Disaster, Girls Who Wear Glasses, and The Smartest Girl in the World. She has written the book and lyrics for two musicals, The Three Javelinas and A Very Hairy Javelina Holiday, and created Seen for Childsplay’s 2020/21 online season.

Michelle Chin (Music Director) is overjoyed to be back at Childsplay! Directing/music directing credits: Murder for Two (The Phoenix Theatre Company/Director), The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane (Childsplay/Assistant Director), Selena Maria Sings (Digital Workshop, Childsplay/Music Director), You Can’t Say That! (Staged Reading, TPTC/Director), The Antipodes (Stray Cat Theatre/Assistant Director), A Christmas Story (Arizona Broadway Theatre/Youth Music Director), and The Last Five Years (Staged Concert/Director). Other Childsplay acting credits include: Ella Enchanted (Ella), A Thousand Cranes (Sadako), Goodnight Moon (Mouse, Cat, Bear), and Wonderland (Alice). Michelle is also a musician and plays professionally for concerts, in orchestra pits, and with cover bands. Michelle is a teaching artist and has also directed, music directed, and choreographed for youth theatre and programming around the world. She holds a BM in Music Theatre Performance from ASU.

Addy Diaz (Costume Designer) is always thrilled to get to work with Childsplay. Her previous Childsplay productions include Elephant and Piggie’s “We Are In a Play!”, Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook, Charlotte’s Web, and The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane. Adriana has had the pleasure to work for many companies in the Phoenix area. Her design credits include Florencia en el Amazonas and Rusulka at Arizona Opera, and Calendar Girls, Evita, Over the Rainbow, Anything Goes, Memphis, Ruthless, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, Love Makes The World Go Round and Altar Boys (Phoenix Theatre), Fairyworlds (Desert Botanical Garden and Southwest Shakespeare), King Lear, Equivocation, Taming of the Shrew, Christmas Carol (Southwest Shakespeare). The Big Meal (Studio Theatre D.C), and Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (Adventure Theatre, MD). Adriana has her MFA from University of Maryland.

Daniel Davisson (Lighting Designer) has designed many productions around the valley working in theatre, dance, opera and corporate events. Daniel has worked for numerous valley theatre organizations including The Phoenix Theatre Company, Theater Works, Scorpius Dance Theatre, Arizona Broadway Theatre, Valley Youth Theatre and East Valley Children’s Theatre. He has designed in New York, California, Las Vegas and New Mexico. Daniel is the CEO + Lead Production Designer for
Davisson Entertainment, a local performing arts and events production company (davissonentertainment.com) and he also serves as the Producing Artistic Director and President for BLK BOX PHX, a local professional theatre company (blkboxphx.com)

**Brunella Provvidente (Scenic Designer)** Brunella Provvidente earned her MFA in Performance Design from Arizona State University, and a Bachelor’s degree in Directing from Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Recent productions as scenic designer include the The Black Theatre Troupe’s 2019-2020 season as resident designer, Elephant and Piggie’s “We Are In a Play!”, And In This Corner Cassius Clay both with Childsplay. Brunella is thrilled to be part of the design team for Selena Maria Sings!

**Esteban Armenta Jr. (Sound Designer)** is excited for his return to theatre with this production of Selena Maria Sings! Esteban previously worked with Childsplay on their production of Elephant and Piggie’s “We Are In a Play!” and is glad to be welcomed back for this new adventure. Esteban received his BA in Theatre from Arizona State University and continues to design and enjoy theatre whenever he can!

**Douglas Clarke (Puppet Designer)** is a regional designer native to the Phoenix area. He received awards for his scenic designs of Welcome Home Jenny Sutter at Mesa Community College and for End of the Rainbow at The Phoenix Theatre Company, as well as nominations for his puppets in She Kills Monsters at Arizona State University, and scenic design of Calendar Girls at Phoenix Theatre. Douglas designed New York City premieres of Coffee and Biscuit at Fallen Swallow/Laughing Pigeon and Unity 1918 at Project: Theater. He also presented Dead Man’s Cell Phone as part of the World Stage Design exhibition in Taipei, Taiwan. He continues to design regionally in Nebraska, Colorado, and Arizona; primarily working on contemporary plays, musicals, and theatre for youth. Douglas received his BA and BFA from Arizona State University, and MFA from University of Maryland, College Park. Member of USA 829. Additional info can be found at douglasclarkedesign.com

**Kody Hernandez (he/they) (Stage Manager)** is a Phoenix College theatre graduate who has been working in and learning about theatre since second grade and been a Selena super fan since learning Bidi Bidi Bom Bom in diapers. They have worked with dance teams, choirs, event planners, and theatres across Arizona to learn and hone their skills. Kody first worked with Childsplay during the 2019 Write Now festival and is very excited to be returning and working on such a powerful and inspirational production.
Dwayne Hartford (Childsplay Artistic Director) moved to Arizona in 1989. He answered an ad in the paper for an acting job. That job was for Childsplay. In 1992, he originated the role of the Father in Childsplay’s world premiere production of The Yellow Boat. Dwayne has directed many shows for Childsplay, including: Ella Enchanted, The Phantom Tollbooth, and Flora & Ulysses. The first play he wrote, Eric and Elliot, received the 2005 Distinguished Play Award from the American Alliance of Theatre & Education (AATE). The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane received the same award in 2018. Dwayne’s plays have been produced professionally around the country including Seattle Children’s Theatre, Dallas Children’s Theatre, Chicago Children’s Theatre, and South Coast Repertory. Dwayne became Childsplay’s Artistic Director upon the retirement of his mentor, the founder of the company, David Saar. Dwayne holds a BFA in musical theatre from the Boston Conservatory. He did graduate work in directing at Boston University. He is from the very small town of Smithfield, Maine.

Steve Martin (Managing Director) is in his 19th season as Managing Director at Childsplay. During this time, the company has moved into the Sybil B. Harrington Campus for Imagination and Wonder; secured significant funding from the US Department of Education for arts education programming throughout the metro Phoenix area; received funding from national foundations including the Hearst Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Trust, and the Shubert Foundation; received substantial support from local foundations including the Legacy Foundation, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, the Flinn Foundation, Steele Foundation, and the Helios Education Foundation; and produced more than 30 world premieres. He is a native of Toledo, Ohio, and a 1983 graduate of the University of Toledo. Martin is currently on the board of East Valley Partnership and formerly served on the boards of Arizona Citizens for the Arts (past President), TYA/USA—the national organization for theatre for young audiences and LORT/League of Resident Theatres. Prior to joining Childsplay, he was Assistant Managing Director of the Alliance Theatre Company in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Managing Director of Virginia Stage Company in Norfolk, Virginia.
SELENA MARIA SINGS SONG LIST

“Volver Remix”
Rudy and Selena Maria

“Sandia Sunshine!”
Rudy and Selena Maria

“Upside Down”
Rudy and Selena Maria

“The Place I’d Rather Never Be”
Selena Maria and Cissy

“Upside Down 2.0/Blue”
Selena Maria and Felly

“Right Side Up!”
Selena Maria, Cissy, Herman, Felly, and Vicki

Develop foundational acting skills with theatre professionals!

Start your theatre journey here at Childsplay where young people develop acting skills, build confidence, and make new friends!

Register now!
childsplayaz.org/classes

“I can’t wait to go back to Childsplay! I’m excited for my performance on Friday, but I don’t want it to be over!”

IN-PERSON & ONLINE CLASSES FOR AGES 4-17
“One of the underlying core values of Childsplay is the notion of ensemble. There is a resident group of theatre artists (our Associate Artists) who, in collaboration with the Artistic Director, are responsible for planning and creating the artistic products that illustrate Childsplay’s mission. But these artists do not create in isolation. Everyone who works at Childsplay—other artists, technicians, educators, administrators and trustees—is a part of this resident ensemble. This mindset guides the way our work is created, the way it is marketed and the way it is delivered.” —Childsplay’s Strategic Plan 2012

Dwayne Hartford ............................................ Artistic Director
Steve Martin ........................................................ Managing Director
Jenny Millinger ............................................. Associate Artistic Director
David P. Saar .................................................. Founder & Artistic Director Emeritus

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Emily Hopfauf, Bookkeeper
Ricky Araiza, Office Manager & Gala Assistant
Greg Estrada, Custodian
Dawn Brown, Finance Consultant
Molly Miller, Office Volunteer

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Debra K. Stevens, Associate Artist
Jon Gentry, Associate Artist
José Cruz González, Artist-in-Residence

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Thomas Underdal, Academy Associate
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Karen Peirce, Development Associate
Jodie Weiss, Events Coordinator
MaryLisa McKallor, Education & Development Associate
Jane Gerke, Company Graphic Designer
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Emma Jackson, Wardrobe Supervisor/Stitcher
Gail Wolfenden-Steib, Cutter/Draper
Lydia Harmon, Cutter/Draper

PRODUCTION & STAGE MANAGEMENT
Rachel Solis, Production Manager
Mara Nadolski, Associate Production Manager
Kody Hernandez, Stage Manager
Ryan Clark, Stage Manager
Phoenix Jacob, Stage Manager
Emma Walz, Assistant Stage Manager
Sarah Ayers, Stage Crew
Dan Cocca, Stage Crew

SCENERY & PROPERTIES
Daniel Williams, Technical Director
David Singleton, Properties Master
Julia Rogge, Scenic Charge Artist

LIGHTING
Bret Reese, Master Electrician

ASL INTERPRETERS
Judy Robbins
Dawn Schoenberger

(Continued)
ASK AN ACTOR!

We asked the cast from Selena Maria Sings

What is something you loved to do when you were young that became a part of who you are?

Here’s what they said:

**Kariana:** “I used to love playing dress up as a kid. My mom had a bag full of my big sisters’ old dance recital costumes, and I absolutely loved putting them on and pretending to be a fairy or a princess or a ballerina. Clothes can be such a great outlet for self-expression. And now that I’m an actor, I get to play dress up for a living!”

**Michael:** “I loved to read when I was a kid, and it helped me make more sense of people and the world back then and even as an adult. I still think in quotes from books.”

**Sedona:** “When I was young, I fell in love with video games. I would entertain myself for hours playing in a virtual world! Today I still love playing video games by myself and with friends. I think it’s such a great way to have fun and connect with others!”

**Andrea:** “Acting! When I was in elementary school, I began acting in school plays and I knew from my first time on the stage (as Snoopy in You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown) that I wanted to be an actor. As a very shy kid, being able to step into another character’s shoes and speak their words helped me to find courage in my own voice, and that remains true to this day!”

**Celena:** “When I was younger, I would sing, dance and act for my family in the kitchen and if anyone interrupted, I would have to start over. I’m so thankful for my family and that they always supported my love for the arts. Even if it meant that they had to be quiet for a few hours!”
CHILDSPRAY COMPANY AND STAFF (Continued)

2021-2022 ACTING COMPANY
Matravius Avent  Katie McFadzen  Lillie Richardson  Rodrigues
Jacqui Castillo  Lauren McKay  Michael Salinas  Michael Thompson
Tommy Francesco  Andrea Morales  Anna Sera  Sedona Valdez
Anissa Garza  Luz Navarro  Debra K. Stevens  Marshall Vosler
Jon Gentry  Issie Ocampo  Thomas Strawser  Celena Morgan
Jermane Jackson  Greta Perlmutter  Bruno Streck

2021-2022 TEACHING ARTISTS
Thomas Underdal  Molly Lajoie  Kendra Kahl  Emily-Rae Tietz
Katie’B Jarvis  Kate Haas  Jason White  Mikayla Wilkerson
Elizabeth Polen  Lillie Richardson  Emily Burritt  Keath Hall
Kim Manning  Garrett Hicks  Ericca Rose  Maddy Moreland
Julio-César Saucedo  Sarah Chanis  Calli Rasmussen  Isabel Julazadeh
Jen Gantwerker  Rachel McCabe  Dorian Peterson  Lauren Westphal
Alli St. John  Cam Oakes  Mary Ellen Loose  Julia Murphy

CHILDSPRAY
THEATRE
480-921-5700 | CHILDSPLAYAZ.ORG

• Childsplay, founded in 1977, is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, teaching and performing for young audiences and families.

• Childsplay’s mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content, or both that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future.

• This season, Childsplay expects to give 700 performances for nearly a quarter million young people in schools and on public stages throughout the state and country.

• Childsplay launched its first national tour in 2007, with Tomás and the Library Lady. Since then, the company has completed 11 more national tours throughout the United States (including Alaska!) and Canada. This season, Childsplay will send both Maddi’s Fridge and The Snowy Day out on national tour!

• Childsplay’s administrative offices, classrooms, rehearsal halls, prop and costume shops are located at the Sybil B. Harrington Campus for Imagination and Wonder at Mitchell Park, 900 South Mitchell Drive, Tempe.

• Childsplay is a constituent of Arizona Citizens for the Arts, East Valley Partnership, Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for American theatre; TYA/USA, the U.S. Chapter of ASSITEJ, the international organization for theatre for young audiences; the Tempe Chamber of Commerce; the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Alliance of Arizona Non-Profits; and the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE).
CHILDSPRAY

THE SOCIETY FOR IMAGINATION AND WONDER

The Society for Imagination and Wonder honors those who have made a significant investment to Childsplay and in supporting the leaders of the future. Thank you for helping us share imagination, wonder and joy with children of all ages.

SOCIETY FOR IMAGINATION AND WONDER LIFETIME MEMBERS

Childsplay gratefully acknowledges our Lifetime Members, who have made cumulative gifts of $20,000 or more as of June 30, 2021.

*Indicates Annual Society Membership as well

VISIONARY: $2,000,000 & ABOVE
Sybil B. Harrington Trust
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TRANSFORMER: $1,000,000 & ABOVE
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(Continued)
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Kate and Kurt Janson
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Coming Soon!

WEEKENDS AT HERBERGER THEATER CENTER
November 7–December 24, 2021
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